

**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**BEAVERTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING**  
JULY 9, 2009

**CALL TO ORDER**

The monthly meeting of the City of Beaverton Traffic Commission was called to order by Vice Chairman Thomas Wesolowski in the Forrest C. Soth City Council Chamber of Beaverton City Hall on Thursday, July 9, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Traffic Commissioners present included Thomas Wesolowski, Ramona Crocker, Thomas Engel, Patrick Reynolds and Steve Harris. Chairman Scott Knees and Commissioner Vincent Tran were excused.

City of Beaverton staff included City Transportation Engineer Jabra Khasho, Transportation Planner Margaret Middleton, Traffic Sergeant Steven Schaer and Commission Recorder Debra Callender.

**VISITORS**

No one in the audience came forward to address the Commission.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

Mr. Khasho had no opening comments.

**CONSENT**

Vice Chairman Wesolowski reviewed the consent agenda comprised of the draft minutes of the June 4, 2009, meeting.

Several Commissioners asked for changes to the draft minutes.

Commissioner Reynolds **MOVED** and Commissioner Harris **SECONDED a MOTION** to approve the amended minutes of the June 4, 2009, Traffic Commission meeting. On discussion, several Commissioners asked for changes to the draft minutes.

The **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously. (5:0)

## **PRESENTATION**

### **2035 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE AND PUBLIC FORUM— TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SOLUTIONS REPORT**

Mrs. Middleton introduced Chris Maciejewski and Garth Appanaitis, transportation consultants representing DKS Associates of Portland, Oregon. The City selected DKS to update Beaverton's Transportation System Plan (TSP) to year 2035. Mr. Maciejewski and Mr. Appanaitis discussed the draft Transportation System Solutions Report for the Commissioner's review and comments.

Vice Chair Wesolowski encouraged the Commissioners to ask questions of the consultants during the presentation. At the end of the presentation, members of the audience are welcome to comment and ask questions of the consultants.

Mr. Maciejewski reviewed how, in earlier meetings with the Commission, DKS looked at Beaverton's existing transportation conditions, future forecasts and the extent of the current system's deficiencies. This presentation focuses on alternatives to resolve those deficiencies, including the screening of prior TSP projects and reprioritizing a new package of future projects that have funding potential. Mr. Maciejewski reviewed the financial constraints and compared them to the identified financial needs.

Mr. Maciejewski said that for this TSP update, Beaverton is extending the timeframe an additional 15 years to the year 2035. Comparing Beaverton's known transportation needs to the funding expected to be available to resolve those deficiencies, shows a funding gap of about \$605 million. That deficit affected how they looked for potential solutions. The Transportation Planning Rule (TPR) does not require resolving all system deficiencies. Mr. Maciejewski said it is more productive to look for methods to optimize Beaverton's transportation investment by identifying high priority, fundable improvements. Previously identified, but unfunded, TSP projects will remain on the list (see Transportation System Solutions Report, Table A-1).

Mr. Maciejewski said this approach shifted the focus to eight transportation corridors that contribute to the majority of the system's delay. This led the consultants to review more thoroughly the projects that might enhance existing systems within these corridors, for example, adaptive traffic signal timing and improved access management. Their goal is to develop a multi-modal approach that will optimize people movement through these corridors, not just motor vehicle movement. TriMet has already established frequent bus service within these corridors. The question is now what Beaverton might do to provide better pedestrian and bicycle connections to the existing transit facilities.

Mr. Maciejewski said they next prioritized the motor vehicle projects based on each project's feasibility, consistency with City policies and congestion benefits. There is no guarantee that improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities will reduce the number of vehicles on the road; however, not providing those facilities will reduce options and increase congestion by adding to the total number of motor vehicles on the road. Using this reasoning, motor vehicle projects emerged as a higher priority. If the Commission wants them to adjust the amount of funding allocated to various transportation modes on the high priority project list, Mr. Maciejewski asked that the Commission provide that direction tonight. In preparing this TSP plan for the City, they "blurred" the jurisdictional boundaries, meaning the City of Beaverton will proactively recommend new priorities to Washington County, Metro and ODOT if improvements are needed on their roadways.

Mr. Maciejewski said the level of congestion projected for 2035 is so severe that our existing policies and assessment tools no longer work. This level of congestion is forcing Metro to reevaluate how they look at our regional transportation system. Beaverton's TSP will identify our high priority projects, so we can continue to pursue funding, while Metro works to create the tools needed to create new policies.

Mr. Maciejewski offered the Commission the opportunity to adjust the list of projects they previously ranked in an online survey. Because there is no way to determine which pieces of land developers will choose to build on first, the solution is to look at city-wide policies and determine what corridors are most likely to fail first.

Regarding Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and the strategies shown in Table 3, Mr. Maciejewski said research shows that pricing is the best way to reduce demand. Any Portland-area employer with more than 100 employees must now develop a TDM program to reduce employee trips by 10% during peak travel hours.

Mr. Maciejewski said updating the TSP every five to ten years allows transportation planners the opportunity to incorporate evolving technologies into the latest plan. The last time Beaverton updated its TSP, adaptive signal timing was being used in Australia, but not yet in the United States. While the City's implemented "solution set" might change, the need for the projects is unlikely to change.

In response to a comment, Mr. Maciejewski noted that the North Bethany area is a Washington County corridor that is outside Beaverton's boundaries. That fact pushed this corridor lower on the priority list. The consultant will take a second look.

Vice Chairman Wesolowski's TSP comments and questions:

Are the proposed projects tied to the potential budget totals of \$75 to \$115 million? As he understands our priorities, the TSP does not identify funds for interactive communication between drivers and entities with personal navigation information.

Regarding the consultants comments about ranking project feasibility, he said that if they spend money on a project that is feasible, but that does not relieve congestion, that makes no sense. One of the fundamentals of spending public money wisely is to spend money where it has the biggest impact on reducing as much congestion as possible. Feasibility will not always equal results and increased capacity. He is quite concerned about this and wants to be sure there is a cost-benefit analysis completed for the proposed projects. While he supports bicycles as a valid mode of transportation, he wonders if they looked closely at the actual benefits of spending, for example, \$34 million on bike lanes compared to spending the same amount on updated traffic control mechanisms. It almost seems we are using the "if we build it they will come" concept. Beaverton might create the best bike lanes in the country but unless residents want to use them, it is meaningless. He asked the consultant for a more detailed analysis of how they compiled the list of high priority projects.

Vice Chairman Wesolowski observed that the draft TSP ranks items as high, medium and low. As this is a plan that covers 25 years, how do we know which projects should be completed first? We know we have serious congestion problems today and we know these problems will be many times worse 15 years from now. Have we gotten to the point where we are saying, okay we will spend \$25 million in the next two years. We already know the problems exist today. What are the top projects we need to work on now? Forget about modeling what congestion will look like 15 years from now—we have a problem right now that needs attention.

Vice Chairman Wesolowski commented that, where he lived before moving to Oregon, many of the major street improvements were built by developers as a condition of developing their projects. Developers were forced to assume responsibility for their share of the area's increased traffic. Does Beaverton do this?

Regarding Table 3 and TDM options, he observed that some of these options seem more like the stick rather than the carrot. If a business started charging their employees for parking, then many of the employees would need to find a different way to get to work. He wondered how many of these strategies are actually feasible. Have the people proposing the TDM strategies communicated with the business community to discover ways to encourage people to try these strategies? Vice Chairman Wesolowski said his wife telecommutes two days per week. He noted that this involved a substantial investment from her company, for example purchasing a computer, printer, fax and then providing an internet connection for the house. He said this could be a big investment for a company just to keep one car off the road two days a week. How can we encourage companies to make this kind of commitment?

Vice Chairman Wesolowski said he is not in favor of spending more money building more roads. The first place to spend money is installing adaptive traffic signal timing and similar new technologies that keep traffic moving. Many Beaverton streets now

have stop and go traffic both during the day and during rush hours. Some traffic signals stall traffic by allowing only two vehicles to pass per cycle, while 15 cars continue to wait, idling, and polluting the air. Some traffic signal cycles in Beaverton are so unreasonably long, he turns off his car's motor to avoid polluting the air. Improvements to traffic signal timing would bring immediate benefits. The other projects, such as bike lanes, sidewalks and new roadways might provide benefits long term. Improving traffic control is the fastest fix for Beaverton's congestion.

Vice Chairman Wesolowski commented that he is impressed with the depth of analysis that went into preparing the draft TSP update.

Commissioner Harris's TSP comments and questions:

Commissioner Harris asked for details about how adaptive traffic signals operate and how they adjust to changing traffic volumes.

Regarding TDM, Commissioner Harris said a business he owns actually benefits from peak hour traffic. If peak traffic were spread evenly throughout the day, he would need to keep his business open more hours each day, with less revenue generated per hour. That change could strain resources and negatively affect the small businesses that depend on serving most of their customers during peak traffic hours.

Commissioner Harris said he lives near Scholls Ferry and Davies Road. His business is located on Scholls Ferry and Mrs. Harris works near Hall Boulevard and Nimbus Avenue. Their short commutes to work are highly unusual; nevertheless, they still prefer to drive their cars to work because it feels safer. Walking or riding a bicycle in the Scholls Ferry bike lanes feels unsafe to him. As much as we might want commuters to use other modes of transportation, we must think about whether those transportation modes are actually safe. We want people to use alternative transportation modes, and we want those modes to feel safe. He reported that recently, on a quiet Sunday morning, he and Mrs. Harris decided to ride their bicycles to downtown Beaverton for coffee. Although it was a quiet time of the week, the ride was distressing because of the amount of fast-moving traffic they encountered. He can only imagine the safety challenges bicycle commuters face riding to and from work during weekday commuter traffic.

Commissioner Harris said he must have his car available during work hours to pick up supplies and run errands. The area's public transportation system is not favorably set up to support alternatives. If he had a traditional office job in downtown Portland, he would definitely leave his car at home and use public transportation. He wondered what percentage of working people has such a straightforward commute.

Commissioner Harris understands that local jurisdictions will never build the much discussed West Side Bypass. If it had been built, would it have changed the TSP?

Commissioner Harris noted that this TSP projects transportation needs to year 2035, yet there are many emerging technological innovations for motor vehicles, such as sensors, global positioning systems and adaptive traffic signals. Might some of these partially solve our area's traffic problems before 2035? We now have information that we were unaware of during our last TSP eight years ago. Has the shifting of demand lowered the urgency of some of the high priority projects on the list?

Commissioner Engel's TSP comments and questions:

What is the status of getting real-time navigation information in individual vehicles? Has anyone raised the issue of "big brother" in regards to intelligent transportation system monitors giving the government information about the movement of individual drivers? How do they respond to that concern? Commissioner Engel said the consultant's materials do not include the Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District's trail system. Will that project eventually provide transportation system benefits? The Commissioner commented that his in-laws live in Boulder County, Colorado and that area has an outstanding trail system for walkers and bicycles. The trail system began as a recreational plan that grew to become part of the area's transportation network.

Commissioner Engel asked if the consultant received any directions for a specific allocation of funding toward pedestrian and bicycle projects.

Commissioner Engel said he sees wisdom in making big bets on high impact projects. What would happen if we decided not to spread the available funds among many small projects? What if we decided instead to direct most of the available funds to a few, high impact projects? This might make a stronger impact than "peanut buttering" the limited resources over multiple modes of transportation to make various constituents happy. For example, if we were convinced that adaptive traffic signal management would have the greatest impact, suppose a policy decision was made that said the priority for the investment pool will be at "X allocation" and then projects were selected from there. We would bet most heavily on adaptive traffic signal management, leaving the other priorities to fall farther down the list.

Commissioner Engel wondered what level of congestion would cause drivers enough distress to actually change their behavior and cause them to drive less. Perhaps in 2015 or 2020 drivers will say, "Oh, Beaverton's traffic is so horrible I refuse to drive there." Realistically, every other city would have the same level of congestion. He wondered about the tools Metro uses to forecast the region's transportation needs.

Commissioner Engel was surprised by the prioritization of the Bethany-Murray Hill corridors because there is so much new development coming out of that rural land, both now and in the next few years. He has observed that the narrow access corridors to Highway 26 are always congested. Commissioner Engel said he was surprised that this was not ranked higher on the prioritization. He acknowledged that the consultant used hard data for the prioritization.

Commissioner Crocker's TSP comments and questions:

Regarding transportation demand management, Commissioner Crocker said congestion pricing and charging employees for parking are the equivalent of blaming the victim. She pointed out that drivers would not be on the road during peak traffic hours if their employers did not demand that they work during standard business hours. Employers are the ones who must be reeducated and held accountable. She observed that our area appears headed for unlimited growth. Commissioner Crocker suggested that employers implement staggered work shifts throughout a 24-hour workday. Realistically, most employees cannot work from home on computers. The idea of charging commuters for using the roads during peak traffic hours is both wrong and unfair.

Public Comment

James C. Parsons, Beaverton, Oregon, observed that the City of Vancouver, British Columbia has created a successful pedestrian-friendly environment. He suggested that Beaverton study Vancouver's example.

Mr. Parsons said a hedge encroaches on the sidewalk on SW Farmington Road just west of Erickson Avenue. There is a traffic sign installed in the middle of the sidewalk at the same location. The hedge and sign make travel difficult for bicycles, pedestrians and wheelchairs on this section of sidewalk. Mr. Parsons said he previously reported these problems to the City's Code Services section.

On Canyon Road (State Highway 8) east of Lombard Avenue, Mr. Parsons said the sidewalk on the bridge is too narrow. He would like the City to build a wider sidewalk extending out from the south side of the bridge rail. The new sidewalk would serve bicycles and pedestrians.

Mr. Parsons said that farther to the east on Canyon Road, a painted bike lane begins; however, there is no ramp leading from the sidewalk onto the bike lane. Bikes have to either jump down or use the pedestrian ramp at the intersection.

Turning to another concern, Mr. Parsons said that all the street trees on Hall Boulevard need trimming.

Mrs. Middleton asked if Mr. Parsons had any comments that related directly to the Transportation System Plan Update.

Mr. Parsons said he hopes the plan includes bike access that parallels Highway 217. This access should not have bike riders crossing back and forth under and over Highway 217.

*Vice Chair Wesolowski closed the public comment section of the presentation.*

Mr. Maciejewski asked the Commission for their consensus on recommendations to move the TSP update ahead.

After discussion, Vice Chairman Wesolowski summarized the Traffic Commission's message to the consultants:

- Beaverton wants more "bang for their buck" in the near term.
- Installing adaptive traffic signal timing is more critical than adding more roads.
- Use funds and resources efficiently. This is critical. The Commission recognizes that this can be challenging, especially when working with long TSP timelines and where no direct cost-benefit analysis is possible.
- Support TDM strategies to reduce the number of motor vehicles on the roads.
- Cooperate with Washington County, ODOT and Metro so they can do their jobs, while Beaverton focuses on projects here.
- Remain aware that the City's vision will change over time.

## OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Khasho had no updates and the Commissioners had no old business to discuss.

## NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Khasho said staff has no issues ready to bring to the Commission in August. He asked the Commission if they wanted to cancel their August meeting.

Commissioner Reynolds **MOVED** and Commissioner Engel **SECONDED** a **MOTION** to cancel the August 2009 meeting. No discussion followed. The **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously. (5:0)

Vice Chair Wesolowski said at the last meeting they discussed a new traffic signal that was recently installed near Hiteon Elementary School at Brockman and Davies Roads. He expressed concern about several safety issues. Eastbound on Brockman, the line of sight is unusually poor for drivers as they approach the new traffic signal. Low-hanging tree branches impair sight and the roadway has a curve and a dip.

Mr. Khasho agreed. He has already arranged to have crews trim the tree limbs. In addition, when the traffic signal was designed an additional signal head was added on the left side of the roadway. This auxiliary signal head compensates for the limited sight distance and alerts drivers that they are approaching a traffic signal.

Commissioner Reynolds said many drivers proceeding eastbound on Walker Road



run the red traffic signal at 158<sup>th</sup> Avenue. While sitting in his vehicle on the south side of the intersection observing traffic, he noted frequent violations. He believes a police officer could write numerous citations, if one were present. Commissioner Reynolds has watched as pedestrians, who had a clear walk signal, jumped back to avoid colliding with vehicles that were driving through the red light.

Sgt. Schaer asked Commissioner Reynolds to provide a timeframe when police would be most likely to see multiple violations. He will deploy officers during those hours.

Commissioner Reynolds said he has seen repeated violations from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Harris addressed Mr. Parsons and thanked him for his participation in the Transportation System Plan Update.

Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Khasho if the sites that Mr. Parsons mentioned are under the Traffic Commission's jurisdiction.

Mr. Khasho encouraged Mr. Parsons to telephone him directly first if he notices the type of problems he described tonight. Mr. Khasho said he would field check any reported problems and determine if they meet the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. As for the sign on Farmington near Erickson, Mr. Khasho said he has the authority as City Transportation Engineer to remove or relocate signs without involving the Commission. Regarding the bridge sidewalk on Canyon Road, he has no authority because Canyon Road is an ODOT facility. However, he has looked at the sidewalk on the bridge and it meets minimum ADA requirements.

Commissioner Harris asked if sidewalks are under Traffic Commission jurisdiction.

Mr. Khasho said that typically they are not.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chairman Wesolowski adjourned the July 9 meeting of the Traffic Commission at 8:40 p.m. The next meeting of the Commission is September 3, 2009.

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Debra Callender  
Traffic Commission Recorder